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Review of ADHD: What everyone needs to know

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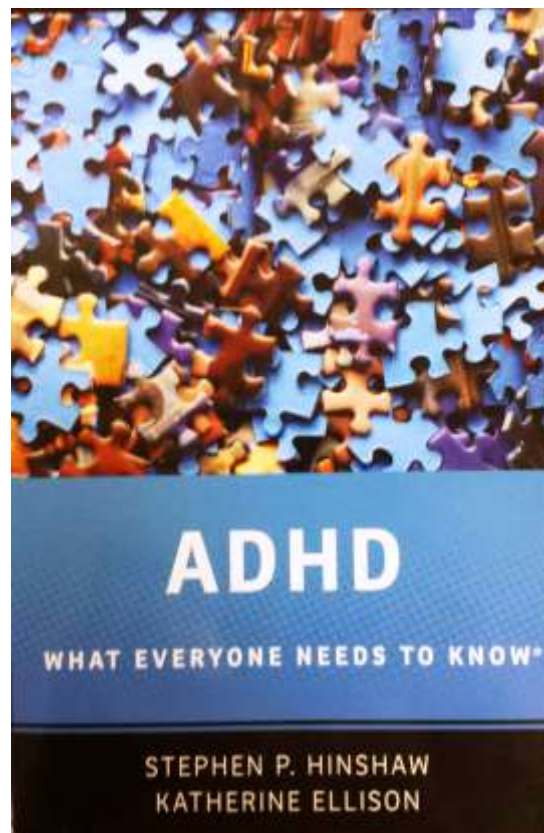
Hinshaw, S. P., & Ellison, K. (2016). *ADHD: What everyone needs to know*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Pp. 191

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ADHD: What Everyone Needs to Know offers an unbiased and balanced synthesis of various and complex aspects of Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) in about 176 pages of highly organized text. As a school psychologist who serves many students with ADHD, I chose this book in hopes to add to my personal knowledge of the nature of ADHD and effective interventions for students with ADHD in order to improve recommendations given to both teachers and parents. The book is part of an academic series offered by the Oxford University Press containing books written by individuals regarded as experts on current topics within the following broad categories: arts and humanities, law, medicine and health, science and mathematics, and social sciences. All books in the *What Everyone Needs to Know* series are organized in a question and answer format. Readers will likely enjoy this aspect of the book. For example, immediate



gratification is experienced when reading Hinshaw and Ellison's research-based answers to highly debated, yet frequently asked questions such as, "How should ADHD be diagnosed? (p. 45)" and "How long do medication benefits last? (p. 106)".

The book is divided into two parts. In part one, the authors explore factual information regarding ADHD, including the local and world-wide prevalence of ADHD, etiology, factors related to the diagnosis of the disorder, the progression of the disorder over one's lifetime, and diversity-related factors such as race and gender that can influence the topography of the disorder and prevalence. Part two of the book provides an overview of effective treatments and strategies used to treat ADHD, including medication, behavioral therapy, parent training, and neurofeedback. The culminating chapter outlines conclusions surrounding the growing number of individuals diagnosed with ADHD and offers recommendations regarding educational policy and guidelines for evaluations. Finally, the book concludes with a comprehensive list of resources (i.e., books, internet sites, and journals) for those seeking more information about ADHD.

ADHD: What Everyone Needs to Know is an excellent resource for parents, practitioners, trainers and students in education preparatory and mental health programs. Also, the book would be a great starting point for adults who are wondering if they or others they know have ADHD and for those recently diagnosed with ADHD. ADHD is a very complex topic, so readers interested in learning about how to implement specific strategies will likely need to look elsewhere; however, *ADHD: What Everyone Needs to Know* provides a user-friendly, birds-eye view of the disorder and provides direction should the reader wish to seek more information regarding particular topics.

A strength of this book is that readers will find up-to-date research-based recommendations and answers to questions that are commonly asked by parents and

teacher alike, such as whether or not diet can have significant effects on ADHD symptomology and whether or not neurofeedback is a beneficial investment. Hinshaw and Ellison eloquently dispel many myths that are often purported by media, findings from poorly designed research, and misinformed parents by presenting a synthesis of research conducted and, in some cases, research that is currently being conducted. Frequently, an evaluation of the research design of studies examined is presented as well. Furthermore, the author's charge to readers to use person-first language for not just individuals with ADHD, but also for other mental health disorders is commendable. Person first language is the practice of placing the child before the diagnosis rather than the diagnosis before the child. For example, person first language would recommend the phrase "children with ADHD" rather than "ADHD children".

ADHD: What Everyone Needs to Know does not ignore the role of the family and parenting for children with ADHD. Research is presented that outlines the detrimental effects that a child with ADHD can have on their parents, as well as the protective factors that specific parenting strategies can have for children with ADHD. Also, the authors highlight the dearth of professionals that can provide effective parent training. Additionally, there is a need for more professionals to be trained in how to remediate behaviors that children with ADHD often exhibit in both the school and home setting. Another important theme expressed in *ADHD: What Everyone Needs to Know* is that females have a specific presentation of attention problems that is overlooked in childhood, as well as detrimental long-term consequences when it is undiagnosed. Furthermore, the authors indicate that adult females are a rapidly growing population of newly diagnosed individuals and advocate for researchers to investigate ADHD in females in order to inform diagnostic criteria and related policies.

Perhaps the most intriguing and thought provoking theme in *ADHD: What Everyone Needs to Know* is that the current state of affairs regarding ADHD diagnosis occurs within a context of the following variables: educational policies, healthcare insurance policies, policy regarding income for disabilities (i.e., SSI), lack of adherence to recommended ADHD assessment guidelines, historical variables (i.e., when medication was discovered as an effective treatment), improved data collection of ADHD diagnoses, changes in the way pharmaceutical companies could advertise medicine, changes in pediatrician guidelines, and increasing rates of babies with low birth rates. The context in which ADHD is currently occurring creates a perfect storm for over-diagnosing in the United States. While considering the various factors that drive parents to investigate whether or not their child has ADHD or whether or not they have ADHD themselves, readers may find themselves understanding the problem to an even greater degree than they ever have before. The reader may find himself or herself motivated to be a part of a movement toward more accurate diagnoses whether it be a practitioner who adopts a strict adherence to research-based assessment guidelines, a teacher who employs strategies such as more hands on projects and increased attention to positive behaviors rather than referring to a child as having attention problems, or a parent that advocates for educational policy to protect children from over-diagnoses.

Although Hinshaw and Ellison provide a comprehensive picture of the current factors influencing ADHD diagnoses in the United States, the authors specifically highlight the role of educational policy,

specifically accountability regulations that mandated federal funding of schools to be dependent upon a school's performance on high stakes standardized testing. The authors call for a reconsideration of the pressures placed upon schools through such policy and advocate for the implementation of strategies and techniques that would be helpful to students with ADHD and students without ADHD alike. The book may have been improved by including recommendations to policies that would equip more mental health practitioners, educators, and parents with the skills needed to implement effective strategies and interventions when children display behaviors associated with attention problems. In addition, although the authors briefly describe many helpful interventions and strategies for individuals with ADHD under broad categories, such as parent training and behavior therapy, a reader seeking more comprehensive and specific, evidence-based techniques to implement immediately will need to consult additional resources. The resources that this reviewer would recommend are listed in Hinshaw and Ellison's final section of the book.

Overall, *ADHD: What Everyone Needs to Know* is a resource for practitioners, teachers, students, individuals with ADHD, and mental health service providers to access up-to-date information surrounding myths and facts related to ADHD, as well as the influence that public policy has on the prevalence of ADHD. Furthermore, the content of the book will likely provide direction to an individual seeking helpful strategies that can be employed when a person is struggling with the daily challenges that the symptomology of ADHD can often present.

About the Reviewer


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Dr. Lisa McCleary is an Assistant Professor in the School Psychology programs at Stephen F. Austin State University, and the Supervisor of School Psychology Services and Director of Training for a pre-doctoral internship training program in school psychology at the Stephen F. Austin Charter School. In 2011, she received her Ph.D. in School Psychology and her M.S. in Applied Educational Psychology from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. After graduating, Dr. McCleary worked as a school psychologist and behavior specialist in a few school districts in East Tennessee before coming to work in academia. Her research interests include social-emotional learning, systems-level intervention, supervision in school psychology, and multi-tiered systems of support.



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